*The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde

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**Summary**

Dorian becomes so entranced with the book about the young Parisian that he begins collecting copies in different colors to match his moods. He engrosses himself in the study of beautiful things and conceals himself from society. Years pass and he is the talk of the town. Rumors exist that he does terrible things and corrupts those he is close to (as there are some accusations that several of his old best friends have committed suicide). The picture by Basil stays locked away in Dorian’s house, where Dorian watches it deteriorate horribly. He is driven wild at the fact that while the painting becomes more gruesome to look at, his body has not aged very much at all. On Dorian’s 38th birthday, he runs into Basil outside of a bar, and the two return to Dorian’s house to catch up. Basil explains that he is leaving that night for Paris, but wanted to ask Dorian about the horrible rumors he has heard. Dorian refuses to deny anything and the two argue. Dorian then takes Basil up to the room where the painting is locked, and Basil is terrified by the way his painting has deteriorated, making Dorian look inhuman and cruel. The two men continue to argue, with Dorian finally telling Basil that his corruption was all Basil’s fault. Hatred brews inside Dorian while he stares at the painting. Dorian stabs Basil to death and leaves him locked inside the room, with no remorse over what he had done. The next day, Dorian sends for an old and distant friend, Alan Campbell, to come to his home. Dorian asks Alan, a lover of chemistry, to get rid of the body. When Alan refuses, Dorian blackmails him with a terrible secret. Alan destroys the body that day, and Dorian returns to the room to find no body.

**Analysis**

This section was terribly confusing for the first half. I wondered when I’d find out what these horrible things Dorian had done were, but there was never any mention of the specifics. I’m not entirely sure if the horrible things occurred before Dorian’s seclusion or during. It was eerie to see what had happened to Dorian and how unhinged he had become, but obvious that something terrible would happen to Basil by going to Dorian’s house. When the two men went to the locked room together, I had a feeling Basil would not be leaving alive. It was especially sad to see Basil die and Dorian as his deranged murderer, but became evident then that Dorian had really been so corrupted there was not one ounce of his innocent self remaining.

**Application**

After Dorian’s seclusion, it became evident that corruption and anger were the two most obvious themes for this section. Dorian’s corruption by Basil’s painting was inadvertent, but his corruption by Henry was intentional. Despite the two different types, we didn’t see their full effects until he had reached full maturity. Corruption can be similar to loss of innocence, but much more negative (and less often). His anger was better hidden, as it began as an obsession that festered into extreme hatred. Anger is a trait that every human experiences time and again, but effects us differently depending on how we choose to handle it. Dorian, with his arrogance and excessive corruption, was not equipped to handle this anger – and Basil suffered because of it.